

2,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA

First and Greatest Story of a Submarine Boat
By JULES VERNE

IT BEATS THE DEUTSCHLAND!

There is no story of such timely and absorbing interest as this wonderfully prophetic, world-famous classic relating strange, thrilling adventures concerned with a craft of the deep conceived by the most imaginative writer in the history of fiction years before the skill of man produced the terrible U-boat.

CHAPTER I. A Shifting Reef.

THE year 1866 was signalled by a remarkable incident, a mysterious and inexplicable phenomenon, which doubtless no one has yet forgotten. Not to mention rumors which agitated the maritime population, and excited the public mind even in the interior of continents, mariners were particularly excited. Merchants, captains of vessels, seamen, both of Europe and America, naval officers of all countries, and the governments of several states on the two continents, were deeply interested in the matter.

For some time past vessels had been met by "an enormous thing," a long object, spindle shaped, occasionally phosphorescent, and infinitely larger and more rapid in its movements than a whale.

The facts relating to this apparition (entered in various logbooks) agreed in most respects as to the shape of the object or creature in question, the untiring rapidity of its movements, its surprising power of locomotion and the peculiar life with which it seemed endowed. If it was a cetacean, it surpassed in size all those hitherto classified in science. Taking into consideration the means of observations made at diverse times—rejecting the timid estimate of those who assigned to this object a length of two hundred feet, equally with the exaggerated opinions which set it down as a mile in width and three in length—we might fairly conclude that this mysterious being surpassed greatly all dimensions admitted by the ichthyologists of the day, if it existed at all. And that it did exist was an undeniable fact; and, with a tendency which disposes the human mind in favor of the marvellous, we can understand the excitement produced in the entire world by this supernatural apparition. As to classifying it in the list of fables, the idea was out of the question.

On the 20th of July, 1866, the steamer Gov. Higginson, of the Calcutta and Hurnach steam Navigation Company, had met this moving mass five miles off the east coast of Australia. Captain Higginson said that at first that he was in the presence of an unknown sand-bank, he even prepared to determine its exact position, when two columns of water, projected by the inexplicable object, shot with a hissing noise a hundred and fifty feet up into the air. Now, unless the sand-bank had been submitted to the intermittent eruption of a geyser, the Gov. Higginson had to neither more nor less than with an aquatic mammal, unknown until then, which threw up from its blow-holes columns of water mixed with air and vapor.

Similar facts were observed on the 28th of July in the same year, in the Pacific Ocean, by the Columbus, of the West India and Pacific Steam Navigation Company. But this extraordinary cetaceous creature could transport itself from one place to another with surprising velocity; as, in an interval of three days, the Gov. Higginson and the Columbus had observed at two different points of the coast, separated by a distance of more than seven hundred nautical leagues.

Fifteen days later, two thousand miles further off, without the Cape of Good Hope, the States and the Shannon, of the Royal Mail Steamship Company, sailing to windward in that portion of the Atlantic lying between the Azores and the Azores, and the States, respectively signalled the monster to each other in 42 degrees 15 minutes north latitude and 50 degrees 15 minutes west longitude; they then simultaneously justified in estimating the minimum length of the mammal at more than three hundred and fifty feet, as the States and the Shannon were of smaller dimensions than it, though they measured three hundred feet over all.

Now, the largest whales, those which frequent the Aleutian, Kulaimak, and Ungulich islands, have never exceeded the length of sixty yards, if they attain that.

These reports, though fresh observations, greatly influenced public opinion. During the first months of the year 1867 the question seemed never to revive, when new facts were brought before the public. It was then no longer a scientific problem to be solved, but a real danger seriously to be avoided. The question took quite another shape. The monster became a small island, a rock, a reef, but a reef of indefinite and shifting proportions.

On the 5th of March, 1867, the Moravian of the Montreal Ocean Company, finding herself during the night in 27° 30' latitude and 72° 15' longitude, struck on her starboard quarter a rock, marked in no chart for that part of the sea. Under the combined efforts of the wind and its 400 horse power, it was going at the rate of 18 knots. Had it not been for the superior strength of the hull of the Moravian she would have been broken by the shock and gone down with the 27 passengers who were bringing home from Canada.

The accident happened about 5 o'clock in the morning, as the day was breaking. The officers of the quarterdeck hurried to the after part of the vessel. They examined the sea with the most scrupulous attention. They saw nothing but a strong, steady about three cubic fathoms distant, as if the surface had been violently agitated. The bearings of the place were taken exactly, and the Moravian continued on her way without apparent damage. Had it struck on a submerged wreck or on an enormous rock? They could not tell; but on examination of the ship's bottom when undergoing repairs it was found that part of her keel was broken.

This fact, so grave in itself, might perhaps have been forgotten like many others if three weeks after it had not been re-enacted under similar circumstances. But, thanks to the nationality of the victim of the shock, thanks to the reputation of the company to which the vessel belonged, the circumstance became extensively circulated.

The 12th of April, 1867, the sea being beautiful, the breeze favorable, the Scotia of the Cunard Company's line found herself in 15 degrees 12 minutes

longitude and 45 degrees 37 minutes latitude. She was going at the speed of thirteen knots and a half. At seventeen minutes past four in the afternoon, while the passengers were assembled at lunch in the great saloon, a slight shock was felt on the hull of the Scotia on her quarter, a little aft of the port paddle.

The Scotia had not struck, but she had been struck, and seemingly by something rather sharp and penetrating than shock. The shock had been so slight that no one had been alarmed. Had it not been for the shouts of the carpenter's watch, who rushed on the bridge, exclaiming: "We are sinking! we are sinking!" At first the passengers were much frightened, but Captain Anderson has been reassured them. The danger could not be imminent. The Scotia, divided into seven compartments by strong partitions, could brave with impunity any leak. Captain Anderson went down immediately into the hold. He found that the sea was pouring into the fifth compartment; and the rapidity of the influx proved that the force of the water was considerable. Fortunately this compartment did not hold the boilers, or the fires would have been immediately extinguished. Captain Anderson ordered the engines to be stopped at once, and one of the men went down to ascertain the extent of the injury. Some minutes afterwards he returned, exclaiming: "We are sinking! we are sinking!" At first the passengers were much frightened, but Captain Anderson has been reassured them. The danger could not be imminent. The Scotia, divided into seven compartments by strong partitions, could brave with impunity any leak. Captain Anderson went down immediately into the hold. He found that the sea was pouring into the fifth compartment; and the rapidity of the influx proved that the force of the water was considerable. Fortunately this compartment did not hold the boilers, or the fires would have been immediately extinguished. Captain Anderson ordered the engines to be stopped at once, and one of the men went down to ascertain the extent of the injury. Some minutes afterwards he returned, exclaiming: "We are sinking! we are sinking!"

Such was the last fact, which resulted in exciting once more the report of public opinion. From the moment when the Scotia was so perfectly destroyed, it could not have been more neatly done by a punch. It was clear, then, that the instrument producing the perforation was not of a common stamp, and after having been driven with prodigious strength, and piercing an iron plate 1½ inches thick, had withdrawn itself by a retrograde motion truly inexplicable.

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CHAPTER II. Pro and Con.

AT the period when these events took place I had just returned from a scientific research in the disagreeable territory of Nebraska, in the United States. In virtue of my office as assistant professor in the Museum of Natural History in Paris the French Government had attached me to that expedition. After six months in Nebraska I arrived in New York toward the end of March, laden with a precious collection. My departure for France was fixed for the first days in May. Meanwhile I was occupying myself in classifying my mineralogical, botanical and zoological riches, when the accident happened to the Scotia.

I was perfectly up in the subject which was the question of the day. I had read and re-read all the American and European papers without being any nearer a conclusion. On my arrival at New York the question was at its height. The hypo-



THE MONSTER, THROWING OUT AN INTENSE, RADIATING LIGHT, RUSHED SUDDENLY TOWARDS THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

thesis of the floating island and of an unapproachable sandbank, supported by minds little competent to form a judgment, was abandoned. And, indeed, unless this shoal had a machine in its stomach, how could it change its position with such astonishing rapidity?

From the same cause the idea of a floating hull of an enormous wreck was given up.

There remained, then, only two possible solutions of the question, which created two distinct parties: on one side, those who were for a monster of colossal strength; on the other, those who were for a submarine vessel of enormous motive power.

But this last hypothesis, plausible as it was, could not stand against inquiry made in both worlds. That a private gentleman should have such a machine at his command was not likely. Where, when and how was it built and how could its construction have been kept secret? Certainly a government might possess such a destructive machine. And in these disastrous times, when the impetuosity of man has multiplied the power of weapons of war, it was possible that without the knowledge of others, a state might try to work such a formidable engine. After this hypothesis came the torpedoes, after the torpedoes the submarine rams, then the reaction. At least, I hope so.

But the hypothesis of a war machine, before the declaration of war, was a public interest was in question, and transatlantic communications suffered, their veracity could not be doubted. But how could the construction of this submarine boat have escaped the public eye? For a private gentleman to keep the secret under such circumstances would be very difficult, and for a state whose every act is persistently watched by powerful rivals, certainly impossible.

After inquiries made in England, France, Russia, Prussia, Spain, Italy and America, even in Turkey, the hypothesis of a submarine monster was definitely rejected.

Upon my arrival in New York several persons did me the honor of consulting me on the phenomenon in question. I had published in France a work in two volumes entitled "Mysteries of the Great Submarine Grounds." The Hon. Pierre Aronax, professor in the Museum of Paris, was called upon to express a definite opinion of some sort. I did something. I spoke for want of power to hold my tongue. I discussed the question in all its forms, politically and scientifically; and I gave here an extract from a carefully studied article. It ran as follows:

"After examining one by one the different hypotheses, rejecting all other suggestions, it becomes necessary to admit the existence of a marine animal of enormous power.

"The great depths of the ocean are entirely unknown to us. Soundings can not reach them. What passes in those remote depths—what beings live, or can live, twelve or fifteen miles below the surface of the water—what is the organization of these animals—we can scarcely conjecture. However, the solution of the problem submitted to me, may modify the form of the dictionary. Either we do know all the varieties of beings which people our planet, or we do not. If we do not know them all, if Nature has still secrets in ichthyology for us, nothing is more conformable to reason than to admit the existence of fishes, or cetaceans of other

kind, or even of new species, of an organization formed to inhabit the strata inaccessible to soundings, and which an accident of some sort, either fantastical or capricious, has brought at long intervals to the upper level of the ocean.

"If, on the contrary, we do know all living things, we must necessarily seek for the animal in question amongst those marine beings already classified; and, in that case, I should be disposed to admit the existence of a gigantic narwhal.

"The common narwhal, or unicorn of the sea, often attains a length of sixty feet. Increase its size fivefold, and give it strength proportionate to its size, lengthen its destructive weapons, and you obtain the animal required. It will have the proportions determined by the officers of the Shannon, the instrument required by the perforation of the Scotia, and the power necessary to pierce the hull of the steamer.

"Indeed the narwhal is armed with a sort of ivory sword, a halberd, according to the expression of certain naturalists. Give it the hardness of steel. Some of these tusks have been found buried in the bodies of whales, which the unicorn narwhal pierces a barrel.

"The Museum of the Faculty of Medicine of Paris possesses one of these defensive weapons, two yards and a quarter in length, and fifteen inches in diameter at the base.

"Very well! suppose this weapon to be six times stronger, and the animal ten times more powerful, launch it at the rate of twenty miles an hour, and you obtain a shock capable of producing the catastrophe required. Until further information, therefore, I shall maintain it to be a sea-unicorn of colossal dimensions, armed, not with halberd, but with a real spear, as the armored frigates, or the ironclads, of the sea.

"The industrial and commercial papers treated the question chiefly from this point of view. Public opinion had been pronounced. The United States were the first in the field; and in New York they made preparations for an expedition destined to pursue this narwhal. A frigate of great speed, the Abraham Lincoln, was put in commission as soon as possible. The arsenals were opened to Commander Farragut, who had over the armoring of the frigate; but, as it always happens, the moment it was decided to pursue the monster the mon-

ster did not appear. For two months no one heard it spoken of. No ship met with it.

So when the frigate had been armed for a long campaign, and provided with formidable fishing apparatus, no one could tell what course to pursue. Impatience grew apace, when on the 2d of June they learned that the steamer of the line of San Francisco, from California to Shanghai, had seen the animal three weeks before in the North Pacific Ocean. The excitement caused by this news was extreme. The ship was revictualled and well stocked with coal.

Three hours before the Abraham Lincoln left Brooklyn pier I received a letter worded as follows:

"To M. Aronax, Professor in the Museum of Paris, Fifth Avenue Hotel, New York.

"Sir: If you consent to join the Abraham Lincoln in this expedition, the Government of the United States will with pleasure see France represented in the enterprise. Commander Farragut has a cabin at your disposal. Very cordially yours,

"J. B. HOBSON.
"Secretary of Marine."

CHAPTER III.
I Form My Resolution.

THREE seconds before the arrival of J. B. Hobson's letter, I, no more thought of pursuing the unicorn than of attempting the passage of the North Sea. Three seconds after reading the letter of the Honorable Secretary of Marine, I felt that my true vocation, the sole end of my life, was to chase this disturbing monster and purge it from the world.

"Concili," I called in an impatient voice.

"Concili was my servant, a true, devoted, Flemish boy, who had accompanied me in all my travels. May I be excused for saying that I was forty years old?

But Concili had one fault, he was credulous to a degree, and would never speak to me but in the third person, which was sometimes provoking.

"Concili," said I again, beginning with feverish haste to make preparations for my departure.

"Did you call, sir?" said he, entering.

"Yes, my boy; make preparations for me and yourself too. We leave in two hours."

"As you please, sir," replied Concili.

"Not an instant to lose; lock in my trunk all travelling utensils, coats, shirts and stockings—without counting as many as you can, and make haste."

"We are not returning to Paris, then?" said Concili.

"Oh! certainly," I answered evasively. "By making a curve."

"Will the curve please you, sir?"

"Oh! it will be nothing; not quite so direct a road, that is all. We take our passage in the Abraham Lincoln."

"As you think proper, sir," coolly replied Concili.

Thus the Abraham Lincoln wanted

for no means of destruction; and, what was better still, she had on board Ned Land, the greatest of harpooners. Ned Land was a Canadian, with an uncommon quickness of mind, and who knew his equal in his business occupation. He was about forty years of age, tall, strongly built, grave and taciturn, occasionally violent, and very passionate when provoked.

Now, what was Ned Land's opinion upon the question of the marine monster? I must admit that he did not believe in the unicorn, and was the only one on board who did not share that universal conviction.

"Well, Ned," said I, "is it possible that you are not convinced of the existence of this cetacean that we are following? Have you any satisfactory reason for being so incredulous?"

The harpooner looked at me fixedly for some moments before answering. "I am not a philosopher," he said, "but I am a harpooner. I have seen the monster, and I have killed him."

"That, Ned, you, a whaler by profession, cannot say, is the greatest marine mammal on earth, whose imagination might easily accept the hypothesis of enormous cetaceans—you ought to be the last to doubt under such circumstances."

"That is just what deceives you, Professor," replied Ned. "That the vulgar should believe in extraordinary beings, travelling space, and in the existence of autochthonous monsters in the heart of the globe, may well be; but neither astronomers nor geologists believe in such chimeras."

"Not one thing, my worthy Canadian," I resumed. "If such an animal is in existence, if it inhabits the depths of the ocean, if it frequents the strata lying miles below the surface of the water, it must necessarily possess an organization the strength of which would defy all comparison."

"And why this powerful organization?" demanded Ned.

"Because it requires incalculable strength to keep one's self in those strata and resist their pressure. Let us admit that the pressure of the atmosphere is represented by the weight of a column of water thirty-two feet high. In reality the column of water would be shorter, as we are speaking of sea water, the density of which is greater than that of fresh water. Very well, when you dive, Ned, as many times thirty-two feet of water as there are above you, so many times does your body bear a pressure equal to that of the atmosphere, that is to say, 15 pounds for each square inch of its surface. It follows, then, that at 320 feet this pressure—that of 10 atmospheres—of 100 atmospheres at 3,200 feet, and of 1,000 at—here at 32,000 feet, that is, about six miles; which is equivalent to saying that, if you could maintain this depth in the ocean, each square inch of the surface of your body would bear a pressure of 5,000 pounds. Ah! my brave Ned, do you know how many square inches you carry on the surface of your body?"

"I have no idea, Mr. Aronax."

"About 6,500; and, as in reality the atmospheric pressure is about 15 pounds to the square inch, your 6,500 square inches bear at this moment a pressure of 97,500 pounds."

"Without my perceiving it. And if you are not crushed by such a pressure, it is because the air penetrates the interior of your body with equal pressure. Hence perfect equilibrium between the interior and exterior pressure, which thus neutralizes each other, and which allows you to bear it without inconvenience. But in the water is another thing."

"Yes, I understand," replied Ned, "because more water is outside than the water surrounds me, but does not penetrate."

"Precisely, Ned; so that at 32 feet beneath the surface of the sea you would undergo a pressure of 97,500 pounds; at 320 feet, ten times that pressure; at 3,200 feet, a thousand times that pressure would be 97,500,000 pounds—that is, a pressure that would be flattened as if you had been drawn from the plates of a hydraulic machine!"

"The devil!" exclaimed Ned.

"Very well, my worthy harpooner, if some vertebrate, several hundred yards long, and large in proportion, could maintain itself in such depths, of those whose surface is represented by millions of square inches, that is, by tens of millions of pounds, we must estimate the pressure they undergo. Mer, then, what must be the resistance of their body against the strength of their organization to withstand such pressure?"

"Why?" exclaimed Ned, "they must be made of iron plates eight inches thick, like the hull of a vessel."

"As you say, Ned. And think what destruction such a mass would cause, if hurled with the speed of an express train against the hull of a vessel!"

"Yes—certainly—perhaps," replied the Canadian, shaken by these figures, but not yet willing to give in.

"Well, have I convinced you?"

"You have convinced me of one thing, sir, which is, that if such animals do exist at the bottom of the seas, they must necessarily be as strong as you say, and mine obdurate harpooner, how explain the accident to the Scotia?"

CHAPTER IV.
Ned Land.

CAPT. FARRAGUT was a good seaman, worthy of the frigate he commanded. His vessel and he were one. He was the soul of it. On the question of the cetacean there was no doubt in his mind, and he would not allow the existence of the animal to be disputed on board. He believed in it as certain good women believed in the levitation—by faith, not by reason. The monster did exist, and he had sworn to rid the seas of it.

The officers on board shared the opinion of their chief. They watched the sea with eager attention. Captain Farragut had spoken of a certain sum of \$2,000,000 for whoever should capture the monster, were he cabin boy, common seaman or officer.

I have said that Captain Farragut had carefully provided his ship with every apparatus for catching the gigantic cetacean. No whaler had ever been better armed. We possessed every known engine, from the harpoon to the blunderbuss, and the explosive balls of the duck gun. On the forecastle lay the perfection of a breech-loading gun, very thick at the breech and very narrow in the bore, the model of which had been in the Exhibition of 1867. This precious weapon was for whoever should throw with ease a conical projectile of nine pounds to a mean distance of ten miles.

Thus the Abraham Lincoln wanted

CHAPTER V.
At a Venture.

THE voyage of the Abraham Lincoln was for a long time marked by no special incident. But one circumstance happened which showed the wonderful dexterity of Ned Land, and proved what confidence we might place in him.

The 30th of June the frigate spoke some American whalers, from whom we learned that they knew nothing of the monster. One of them, the captain of the whaler, told us that Ned Land had shipped on board the Abraham Lincoln, begged for his help in chasing a whale they had in sight. Commander Farragut, desirous of seeing Ned Land at work, gave him permission to go on board the Monroe. And fate served our Canadian so well that, instead of one whale, he harpooned two with a double blow, striking one straight to the heart and catching the other after a breech-loading gun, very thick at the breech and very narrow in the bore, the model of which had been in the Exhibition of 1867. This precious weapon was for whoever should throw with ease a conical projectile of nine pounds to a mean distance of ten miles.

Thus the Abraham Lincoln wanted

CHAPTER VI.
At Full Steam.

AT this cry the whole ship's crew hurried toward the harpooner.

The order to stop her had been given and the frigate now slowly went on by her own momentum. The darkness was then profound, and however good the Canadian's eyes were, I asked myself how he was able to see the monster, and what he had been able to see. But Ned Land was not mistaken, and as all perceived the object he pointed to. At seven o'clock, on the 30th of June, the Abraham Lincoln, on the 30th of June, the sea seemed to be illuminated all over. It was not a mere phosphoric phenomenon. The monster emitted some faint light, and then threw out that very intense but inappreciable light mentioned in the report of several captives. This magnificent irradiation must have been produced by an agent of great shining power. The luminous part traced on the sea an immense oval, whose elongated, the Canadian's eyes were, I asked myself how he was able to see the monster, and what he had been able to see. But Ned Land was not mistaken, and as all perceived the object he pointed to. 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